UNITED NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/46/291/Add.2
22 October 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-sixth session
Agenda item 54

ESTABLISHMENT OF A NUCLEAR-WEAPON-FREE ZONE IN THE REGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum

CONTENTS

Page

REPLIES RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

Israel 2

ISRAEL

[Original: English]

[7 October 1991]

1. Since the submission of the study contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/45/435, annex), the Gulf war has intervened. Consequently, the comments of the Government of Israel on the report pertain to the situation as it appears at present. A few prefatory references to the present circumstances are therefore in order.

2. The Gulf war has borne out Israel's contention that it faces an existential problem, which is separate and apart from the Palestinian problem. Yet, it is only the latter which has been recognized, because it is amenable to compromise. The existential problem was disregarded because there is no compromise between existence and the denial of it. Others could disregard this, but Israel could not.

3. Iraq's threats to obliterate Israel by non-conventional means and its gratuitous launching of over 30 missiles against Israel, as well as the international deployment of half a million troops to confront the Iraqi forces, are stark evidence of what Israel would have had to face all alone from Iraq had it not been for the invasion of Kuwait.

4. Israel had maintained throughout the years that Iraq's threats were backed up by a nuclear programme designed to give substance to them. But Israel was condemned for putting the Osirak nuclear reactor out of action, and the item is still on the agenda of the General Assembly. During the Gulf war, however, Iraqi nuclear installations were specifically targeted by the coalition forces, and the scope of the Iraqi enterprise now stands revealed as a declared threat to Israel and a potential threat to Iraq's neighbours. Had it not been for the invasion of Kuwait, it is doubtful that the international community would have taken note of the resoluteness of the Iraqi nuclear programme any more than it had in the past.

5. Iraq profited from its status as a signatory to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) even as it stood in flagrant violation of its commitments. The concept of a nuclear-weapon-free zone, based solely on all-round adherence to NPT as it is embodied in United Nations resolutions, could not have prevented this development. The concept of a nuclear-weapon-free zone as proposed by Israel these last 11 years, which is based on direct negotiations and includes mutually reassuring arrangements, could most probably have prevented Iraq's menacing enterprise and also might have prevented a Middle East war altogether.

6. On all these topics, on Israel's existential problems, on Iraq's military nuclear multibillion dollar projects in fulfilment of their threats and on Israel's views of a credible nuclear-weapon-free zone, it is regrettable that Israel's voice was a lonely one and that so much effort was instead expended on arraigning and pressuring Israel, from which no threat emanated at any time.

7. This experience fortifies Israel in its belief that it need follow its own counsel, as long as its affairs are not judged on their merits by others.

8. These observations invite some general conclusions.

9. There are regional circumstances and issues, especially in matters of security, which can only be settled if the States of the region feel inclined to settle them. These circumstances pertain to one's immediate neighbours, and they cannot be settled by bland international dispositions. A case in point is Europe, as are the treaties of Tlatelolco and Rarotonga in the nuclear context. It should be noted in this regard that Iraq presented no military threat to any country outside this region.

10. Weapons of mass destruction are, in the view of the Government of Israel, all those weapons that can kill civilians indiscriminately. Superior quantities of conventional weapons are as much a part of this category as are weapons traditionally classified as weapons of mass destruction. Given Israel's situation, it is obvious that arms control need include all these types of weapons.

11. Confidence is the basis for any agreement. And unlike technical dispositions, confidence can only be built over time. The Helsinki Accords took many years to mature, and recent upheavals in Europe illustrate how cautious one need be.

12. In order to reassure Israel, confidence-building measures are a most essential beginning to any credible peace process. Such measures would include, inter alia:

(a) A public recognition and acceptance of any State of the region as an integral part of the region. Israel has throughout affirmed its recognition of the Arab States;

(b) A public declaration on the part of all States of the region that they will not resort to force in the settlement of their differences. Israel, for its part, is ready to reaffirm its repeated pledges to this effect;

(c) A public renunciation on the part of all States of the region of attempts to enforce a boycott of any of them or to delegitimize the international standing of any of them. Israel, for its part, has never employed such measures and undertakes never to resort to them in the future.

13. The recurrent wars in the Middle East, as well as most of the present problems in the region, need not have arisen if these simple modes of conduct had been accepted and observed.

14. The building of confidence, moreover, requires progress on outstanding political problems. For when tensions abate, the likelihood of a promising attempt at arms control grows proportionately. It is far too early to tell if the Middle East is finally emerging from a past fraught with wars. But Israel

cannot contemplate its situation with equanimity as long as its existence is still questioned by any of its neighbours.

15. All that which has been said above is pertinent to the comments of the Government of Israel on the thoughtful report of the Secretary-General. The Government of Israel appreciates the careful analysis contained in the Secretary-General's report and especially of the difficult situation which Israel has faced and continues to face.

16. While a good number of the confidence-building measures of a general nature proposed in the report are acceptable to the Government of Israel, the more substantive proposals make unrequited demands on Israel which are not consistent with the analysis contained in the report itself. These demands would only aggravate Israel's situation rather than alleviate it.

17. The following juxtaposition of the report's analyses and proposals will bear out the concerns of which Israel cannot divest itself.

18. In paragraphs 97 and 98, the report spells out the precariousness of Israel's situation. Yet, no mention is made of express and unconditional threats to Israel's existence nor of the fact that Israel has never threatened any country. In this "sustained hostility between itself [Israel] and the great majority of the States of the region", mentioned in paragraph 98, there is no symmetry. Israel has no a priori hostility towards any State.

19. Paragraph 81 of the report makes a nuclear-weapon-free zone dependent on all-round adherence to NPT or International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. Ample reference to this suggestion has already been made above, and experience has borne out Israel's contentions. It is regrettable that the report makes no reference to Israel's concept of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and its confidence-building modalities.

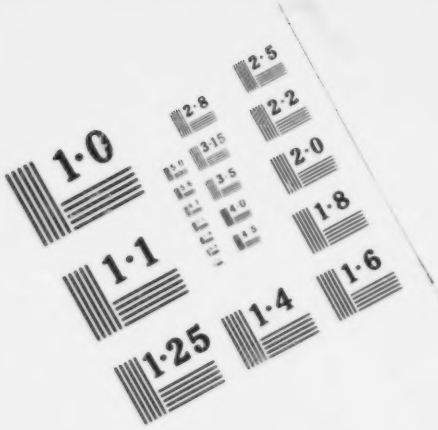
20. The Government of Israel fully supports the references in paragraph 110 to the need for confidence, and the "linkage" among all the elements which affect security as set out in paragraph 151. The Government of Israel especially subscribes to paragraph 153, which says clearly that technical-military confidence-building measures cannot substitute for the political process.

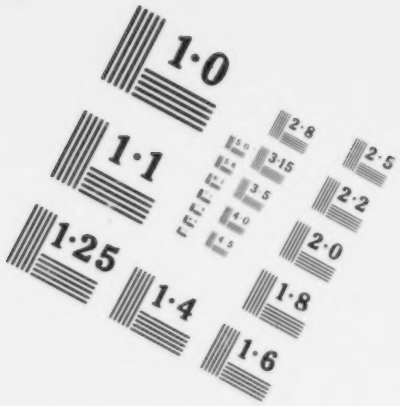
21. In paragraphs 112 to 115, 120, 180 and 181, the report dwells on putting all Israeli nuclear facilities under IAEA inspection. This suggestion is disturbing, because it proposes that Israel abandon its policy of making safeguards dependent on the prior negotiation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and the confidence-building modalities leading towards it. As has been said repeatedly, the Israeli concept need lead to a cessation of wars altogether and the nuclear-weapon-free zone will be credible once all parties have confidence that outstanding disputes will no longer be settled by force.

22. The pressure on Israel to put its nuclear installations under full-scope safeguards ignores, for the sake of principle, Israel's special concerns,

which were recently illustrated by the Gulf war. In particular, the Arabs' refusal to negotiate a nuclear-weapon-free zone with Israel, and their insistence on keeping up international pressure for Israel to accept full-scope safeguards, does not bode well. Israel views this as an attempt to keep it well controlled in the nuclear realm while retaining the option of waging war against it. Israel needs a sustained climate of confidence in order to see things differently.

23. Israel needs to be reassured, above all, that there is a will to redress its precarious situation, as described in the report. Confidence-building by way of direct negotiations and advances in the political process must precede confidence-building measures of a technical nature. The latter feed on the former.





MICROPUBLISHED
BY
READEX MICROPRINT CORP.
NEW CANAAN, CT
USA

24X